

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 TUNIS 02074 131945 Z

51

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-12 PRS-01 RSR-01

/081 W

----- 065354

R 131700 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TUNIS 2074

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, TS

SUBJECT: BOURGUIBA ADDRESSES MEMBERS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

REF: TUNIS 1612, 1330

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA CALLED MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO HIS PALACE WHERE HE ADDRESSED THEM ON SUBJECT OF AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION. MOST IMPORTANT PROPOSAL WAS TO ALLOW PRESIDENT TO SERVE MORE THAN THREE TERMS, AND BOURGUIBA ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO BE A CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT IN 1974. BOURGUIBA ALSO PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS IN AMENDMENTS REGARDING CENSURE. BOURGUIBA AGAIN ATTACKED BOTH AHMED BEN SALAH AND BAHI LADGHAM AS WELL AS OTHERS WHILE REPEATEDLY PRAISING HIMSELF. END SUMMARY.

2. ON APRIL 12, PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA CALLED MEMBERS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO HIS PALACE AND DELIVERED ADDRESS MAINLY CONCERNING AMENDMENTS HE HAD PROPOSED TO ASSEMBLY IN SPEECH MARCH 13 (TUNIS 1330). REPEATEDLY CITING NEED FOR STABILITY AND CONTINUITY, BOURGUIBA PROPOSED THAT PRESIDENT NOT BE RESTRICTED TO ONLY THREE TERMS. USING RECENT TURKISH POLITICAL CRISIS AS EXAMPLE, BOURGUIBA SAID CONSTITUTION SHOULD NOT RESTRICT WILL OF PEOPLE, IF PEOPLE DESIRE PRESIDENT TO CONTINUE. IF PEOPLE FIND PRESIDENT INCAPABLE, THEY CAN VOTE HIM OUT OF POWER AT END OF HIS TERM, BUT IF PRESIDENT

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 TUNIS 02074 131945 Z

(READ BOURGUIBA) WAS PROVEN HIS COMPETENCE AND SHOWN GRAND QUALITIES OF CHIEF OF STATE, CONSTITUTION SHOULD NOT DEPRIVE COUNTRY OF HIS SERVICES. BOURGUIBA THEN CITED EXAMPLES OF TITO, FRANCO, CHURCHILL AND ROOSEVELT AS OLDER MEN WHO HAD SERVED AS CHIEF OF STATE FOR MANY YEARS.

2. BOURGUIBA STATED THAT " DEAD OF ALIVE, I CONSIDER MYSELF RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE PEOPLE, AND GLADLY ASSUME THIS RESPONSIBILITY IN ITS ENTIRETY." RETURNING TO SUBJECT AT END OF SPEECH, BOURGUIBA ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD BE CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT IN 1974. HE RECALLED THAT HE HAD BEEN OFFERED THE PRESIDENCY FOR LIFE AND STATED THAT " IN FACT, THE PRESIDENCY FOR LIFE IS HOMAGE AND MARK OF RECOGNITION FOR SERVICES I HAVE GIVEN TO TUNISIA."

3. TURNING TO PROPOSALS FOR MOTION OF CENSURE, BOURGUIBA SAID HE STILL OF OPINION THAT MOTION OF CENSURE INCOMPATIBLE WITH PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM, BUT HE PREPARED TO ACCEPT IT TO ENSURE AGAINST PROLONGED CONFLICT BETWEEN EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES. HE ASID HE OFFERING NEW PROPOSAL PROVIDING THAT IF MOTION OF CENSURE VOTED BY TWO- THIRDS OF DEPTUTIES, PRESIDENT CAN DISSOLVE ASSEMBLY AND CALL NEW ELECTIONS. BOURGUIBA'S PROPOSALS OF MARCH 13 HAD STATED THAT TWO SUCH MOTIONS WERE NECESSARY BEFORE PRESIDENT COULD DISSOLVE ASSEMBLY, BUT BOURGUIBA SAID THIS WOULD PROLONG CONFLICT AND NOTHING WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BETWEEN TWO MOTIONS. THEREFORE, ON MOTION WAS MUCH MORE EFFICACIOUS AND PRUDENT IDEA. BOURGUIBA SAID THAT PRIMIN WOULD SHORTLY PRESENT NEW PROPOSALS TO ASSEMBLY.

4. BOURGUIBA AGAIN ATTACKED BEN SALAH FOR HIS " POLICIES AGAINST DIRECTIVES OF CHIEF OF STATE" AND ACCUSED BEN SALAH OF SHOWING HIM INCORRECT FIGURES TO JUSTIFY THESE POLICIES. BOURGUBA ALSO SAID HE HAD DISCHARGED BAHI LADGHAM BECAUSE HE WAS INCAPABLE OF TAKING DECISIONS, LACKED INITIATIVE AND, CONTRARY TO BOURGUIBA'S INSTRUCTIONS, PERMITTED FORCE TO BE USED TO PUT DOWN ANTI- BEN SALAH DEMONSTRATION AT OUERDANINE.

5. MOST STRIKING FACET OF SPEECH WAS ITS TONE OF EGOTISM. BOURGUIBA DENIGRATED NOT ONLY " OUTS" LIKE BEN SALAH AND LADGHAM, BUT ALSO MANY OTHERS ON PRESENT OR PAST POLITICAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 TUNIS 02074 131945 Z

SCENE, FOR EXAMPLE, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT MOKADDEM (WHO

WAS PRESENT) AND THE LATE MONGI SLIM. BOURGUIBA GAVE SEVERAL LONG EXAMPLES OF HOW, WHILE OTHERS HAD NEARLY BROUGHT TUNISIA TO ITS KNEES, HE ALONE HAD SAVED COUNTRY.

6. TONE OF LAST TWO BOURGUIBA PUBLIC SPEECHES
DEALING WITH INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY STRIDENT AND EGOTISTICAL ALMOST TO POINT OF MEGLOMANIA. HE IS OBVIOUSLY IN GOOD PHYSICAL CONDITION, BUT CONTINUATION OF HIS CURRENT LINE WILL SHARPEN AND WIDEN PRESENT DIFFERENCES ON INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE. PRESENT SPEECH, LIKE PREVIOUS ONE ON MARCH 27 (TUNIS 1612), IS SURE TO PROVOKE OPPOSITION, NOT ONLY TO "LIBERAL FACTION", BUT PROBABLY ALSO AMONG SOME OF BOURGUIBA'S OWN SUPPORTERS. IN ADDITION, BOURGUIBA ONCE MORE GIVING IMPRESSION OF INDECISIVENESS REGARDING CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES, JUST AS HE DID A YEAR AGO DURING CONTROVERSTY OVER INSTITUTION OF VICE PRESIDENT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT FIRST SPEECH ON CONSTITUIONAL AMENDMENTS MARCH 13 WRITTEN BY NOUIRA, AND THIS APRIL 12 SPEECH PROBABLY REFLECTS BOURGUIBA'S OWN CURRENT VIEWS MORE ACCURATELY. BUT ON WHOLE, SPEECH IS SOMEWHAT DISTURBING

E E E E E E E

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973TUNIS02074
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: CORE
Film Number: n/a
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730444/aaaaipgs.tel
Line Count: 134
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 TUNIS 1612, 1330
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 07 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07-Jan-2002 by willialc>; APPROVED <24-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 980120
Subject: BOURGUIBA ADDRESSES MEMBERS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TAGS: PGOV, TS
To: AF
SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005